

TIPS FOR DUSTY JOBS

Drillers



U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration



Drillers and their helpers are exposed to more dust than the typical mine employee. Because so much drill dust has **silica** in it, you should take steps to protect yourself against a possible health hazard.

Silicosis can be Deadly

Some dust is stopped by the body's natural defense system, but the *smallest* dust particles can penetrate deep into the lungs. The harm from dust depends on what it's made of, what size it is, and how much and how long you breathe it. If you're exposed to enough dust with silica, in time you can get a disease called *silicosis*.

Silicosis can be a disabling, *even fatal*, illness that can't be reversed once a person has it. Lung tissue becomes scarred and inflexible and breathing becomes harder and harder.

If it's Silica...It's Not Just Dust.

Silicosis can't be reversed ...but it can be *prevented*.

Working Smart

- **Never drill** without a working dust control system.
- If a wet system, **don't drill dry!!!**
- **Maintain** dust controls:
 - Keep **drill skirting** tight to contain dust.
 - Keep the **water tank full**.
 - If a dry system, repair all leaks in piping and collector.
 - Adjust your equipment.
- **Compressed air is NOT for cleaning**—clothes or equipment.
- **Work upwind** of dust clouds or dusty areas when you can.
- Place your **cab upwind** of the drilling when you can.
- **Report maintenance or system problems** right away.
- **Drill helpers:** stand upwind, clear of dust clouds.

The Cab

- Use a **heater and an air conditioner** with a HEPA* filter.
- Keep doors and windows **closed** for pressurizing.
- Check that **seals** are **pliable**.
- **Clean** the cab every day.

Respirators must be...

- The **right type, worn right**.
- **Clean**.
- **Worn**—not hung on your neck or on top of your hat.
- The **right fit** to stop dust from getting into your lungs.
- A good fit. **Beards prevent it**.

* **high efficiency particulate air**